

CLAIMS:

What is claimed is:

1. A method for producing a spiral puff extrudate, said extrudate exiting a die orifice in a plastic melt stage and thereafter cooling to a glass transition stage, comprising applying a resistance to the extrudate downstream of the glass transition stage while such extrudate is contained in a peripheral containment vessel.
2. The method of Claim 1 wherein the peripheral containment vessel comprises a tube.
3. The method of Claim 1 wherein the resistance is applied to the extrudate by means of a flapper.
4. The method of Claim 1 wherein the resistance is applied to the extrudate by means of a restriction at at least one point along the peripheral containment vessel.
5. The method of Claim 1 wherein the resistance is applied to the extrudate by introducing a pressurized gas into the peripheral containment vessel.
6. The method of Claim 1 wherein the resistance is applied to the extrudate by a vacuum created within the peripheral containment vessel.

7. The method of Claim 1 further comprising placing a number of extruder dies and corresponding peripheral containment vessels in series such that an extruder face can be attached to an exit end of the extruder dies.
8. The method of Claim 1 wherein the peripheral containment vessel is generally axially oriented in relation to the extrudate.

9. A method for producing a spiral shaped puffed extrudate, said extrudate exiting an extruder die in a plastic melt state before cooling to a glass transition state, said method comprising the steps of:

a) routing the extrudate through a peripheral containment vessel;

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b) applying a resistance to the extrudate while inside the peripheral containment vessel, said resistance applied downstream of the extrudate glass transition point, wherein such resistance is sufficient to cause the extrudate to coil within the peripheral containment vessel.

10. The method of Claim 9 wherein more than one extrudate is routed through a single peripheral containment vessel.

11. The method of Claim 9 wherein the peripheral containment vessel comprises a tube.

12. The method of Claim 9 wherein the resistance to the extrudate is applied by means of a flapper protruding through the containment vessel.

13. The method of Claim 9 wherein the resistance to the extrudate is applied by means of a restriction at at least one point along the peripheral containment vessel.

14. The method of Claim 9 wherein the resistance to the extrudate is applied by introducing a pressurized gas into the peripheral containment vessel.
15. The method of Claim 9 wherein the resistance to the extrudate is applied by a vacuum created within the peripheral containment vessel.
16. The method of Claim 9 wherein the peripheral containment vessel is generally axially oriented in relation to the extrudate.